

CATHOLIC FEDERATION

WELLINGTON DIOCESAN COUNCIL.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR THE HALF-YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1916.

To the Most Reverend President and Members of the Diocesan Council,—Your executive committee has the honor to present its report for the half-year ending December 31, 1916. During that period, five ordinary meetings and two special meetings have been held, each of which was fully attended. In the month of October, Mr. Duggan resigned from the executive, consequent upon going into camp, and Mr. Sievers was elected to the offices of vice-president and member of the Dominion Council. The best thanks of the diocesan council were conveyed to Mr. Duggan by letter signed by every member of the executive.

Parish committees have been kept fully informed of the principal occurrences of the past term by means of the Monthly Bulletin, so that a brief reference to a few of them may be regarded as sufficient.

The Papal Blessing.—The outstanding feature of the last half-year has been the Blessing of our Holy Father Pope Benedict XV. on the New Zealand Catholic Federation, its directors, and its work. This mark of favor on the part of the Sovereign Pontiff should convince us that the aims and ideals of the Federation are in accord with Catholic doctrine and principle, and if faithfully carried out will tend to strengthen Catholic life, and extend the influence of Holy Church.

Christchurch Catholic Congress.—The recent Catholic Congress proved an unqualified success. Your executive conveyed to Bishop Brodie its best wishes upon that occasion.

Organisation and Membership.—In accordance with the resolution passed at the last meeting of the Dominion Council, the work of organisation has now been placed in the hands of the diocesan councils, and as far as this diocese is concerned, it has every reason to be satisfied with the change. Visits have been paid to several parishes by members of the executive, with very satisfactory results.

The total receipts for the half-year, by way of contributions, amount to £277 4s 11d, as against £244 16s 1d. for the full year ending June 30, 1916. The increase of membership is most marked at Napier, Wanganni, and St. Anne's (Wellington), where the efforts of the committees have been well responded to. The example of effective work shown by these and other committees is commended to all.

Suitable propaganda literature has been distributed as far as available. A pamphlet on the education question by the Very Rev. Father Roche, C.S.S.R., with the figures compiled by the secretary to the council, is in the press, and will be distributed at the earliest opportunity.

Education Matters.—Since the last half-yearly report, the Government, in reply to a deputation from the Dominion Council, has definitely refused any assistance—even in minor matters—to the schools conducted with such efficiency and devotion by the religious of the Church in New Zealand. There was no ambiguity about the reply of the Minister of Education to the request for some consideration for our schools, and it was made quite plain that no assistance is to be expected at present in this direction. Your executive, realising the necessity for uniformity of action in this matter, asked for some pronouncement or direction to the councils and committees of the Federation, but up to the present time nothing has been done in the matter.

The Kitchener Scholarships—which are proposed to be established as a memorial to the late Lord Kitchener, and for which the initiative is due to the munificence of the Hon. Colonel R. H. Rhodes,—have received considerable attention at the hands of the Federation during the past term. The form of the scholarships

was referred by the Government to the Council of Education, which reported in favor of naval cadetships either in England or Australia, to which the matriculation examination would be required as an entrance. As this proposal seemed to be totally opposed to the intention of the Hon. Colonel Rhodes—that the scholarships should be open to the children of all men who had fallen in the war—the Dominion Executive requested the Government to reconsider the whole matter, with the result that it has been assured that the question will be reviewed. Your executive desires to place on record its thanks to the Dominion Executive for its prompt action in this matter, in which it rendered a service to the whole of the people of New Zealand.

The Field Service Fund.—The Catholic Field Service Fund has been of considerable service to our soldiers during the past term. A grant of £150 has been made to Chaplain-Captain McMenamin, London, and grants of £50 each to Chaplain-Captains Segrief and Connolly, chaplains of the hospital ships Marama and Maheno respectively, while prayer-books, rosaries, and hymn cards have been placed on board the transports leaving Wellington. A detailed statement of the fund will be placed before you, showing that of the total amount of £599 18s 11d subscribed to the fund, £514 15s 4d was raised in our archdiocese.

Catholic Women's Hostel.—It is pleasing to report that at the end of its first year's existence, the board of management has no need to make a call upon those who were good enough to become guarantors for its financial stability. The report of the board shows that all liabilities have been met, and that there is a small balance to credit. The executive is sure that all will join in extending sincere congratulations to the Hostel Board for its wise and careful management, and to the officers and the matron for their services. The council's representatives on the board for the present year are Messrs. Sievers, Conry, and Johnson.

Offensive Press Cables.—Quite recently the Press Association sent out a cable message in which an offensive reference was made to 'immured nuns.' The message first appeared in the evening papers, whereupon your executive immediately brought the matter under the notice of the editors of the morning journals in the city, with the result that the offensive reference was deleted in both instances.

The Dominion Executive was requested to protest to the Press Association against the dissemination of offensive statements of the kind referred to, with the result that greater care in this direction is promised in future.

Censorship of Cinematograph Films.—This censorship—established in consequence of the movement initiated by the Wellington Diocesan Council—has more than justified its existence. In the short time it has been in force, several films have been totally condemned, while many have been subjected to alterations. It is to be regretted, however, that one film, to which attention was drawn in the last Monthly Bulletin, has been allowed to pass. The attention of the Censor has been drawn to the Catholic objections to the film in question, and your executive has reason to believe that Catholic sentiment will receive more consideration in future.

Conclusion.—In conclusion, your executive desires to thank all officers and members of parish committees for their services during the past half-year. It has again to record the loss of several useful and energetic officers for various reasons. Some are on the way to the front or in camp, while others have resigned on account of removal from the district. The outlook for 1917 is brighter than at this time last year, and the executive hopes that all officers and members of committees will labor with enthusiasm and good-will to further the Federation, and to bring into its ranks every Catholic in the archdiocese of Wellington.

Finally, your executive expresses the hope that before the annual meeting of the council comes round, those members who are or have been engaged upon the battlefield will be on their way home, full of honor, and in good health, and that we may be enjoying the blessings of that peace which is given to all men of good-will.

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